

## Deliverable #4

### Phase I Transit Feasibility Study Public Involvement Summary

The public involvement for Graham County Transit Feasibility Study consisted of:

- Public outreach efforts including stakeholder interviews and public workshops,
- Two Technical Advisory Committee meetings,
- Preparation and revisions of three documents for public, TAC, and elected official review
- Determination by the Towns of Pima and Thatcher, City of Safford and Graham County on whether or not to proceed to Phase II of the Graham County Transit Feasibility Study

Each of these items is discussed below.

#### Public Outreach

##### Stakeholder Interviews

The Public Involvement Plan, Deliverable #2, included the stakeholder interviews conducted during the kick-off meeting held on April 1, 2015.

Additional interviews were held during a 3-day on-site visit May 5-7, 2015 and included stakeholders from the following agencies:

- Department of Economic Security
- Workforce Connection
- Freeport-McMoRan Inc.
- Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center
- San Carlos Apache Tribe
- Eastern Arizona College
- VA Clinic
- Canyonlands Health – Safford Clinic


##### Public Workshops

Three public workshops were held on May 5-6, 2015:

- City of Safford – General Services Building meeting room
- Town of Thatcher – council chambers or conference room
- Town of Pima – town hall

The public meetings were announced in the local newspaper. In addition, TAC members were provided

### Is Public Transportation Needed in Graham County?




Graham County is conducting a Transit Feasibility Study to determine if public transportation is needed and feasible in the Safford, Thatcher and Pima area. We'd like to hear from you. Please attend one of these public workshops and tell us about your transportation needs and concerns. You can drop in anytime during the meeting to talk with one of our team.

#### PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

**SAFFORD**  
Tue, May 5, 5:00-6:30 PM  
General Services Building  
921 Thatcher Blvd.

**THATCHER**  
Wed, May 6, 10:00-11:30 AM  
Thatcher City Hall  
3700 W. Main St.

**PIMA**  
Wed, May 6, 2:00-3:00 PM  
Pima Town Hall  
110 W. Center



with a promotional flyer and asked to assist with recruiting participation in the public meetings by posting the flyer, including information on their own social media sites and encouraging their constituents to attend.

### Focus Groups

To better understand the transportation needs of key potential rider segments, the consulting team worked with TAC members and other stakeholders to recruit and conduct focus groups with several target populations. The following stakeholder meetings were held:

- Eastern Arizona College students (April 21, 2015)
- DES/Workforce Connection clients (May 5-6, 2015)
- WIC Clients through County Public Health (April 21, 2015)
- Seniors at SEACUS Senior Center (May 6, 2015)

The focus groups were used to understand the factors that influence the use of transit in Graham County and to test demand for potential services. This was an education process in presenting simplified examples of service delivery models and service levels and discussing how such services might improve resident mobility.

The findings from the various outreach efforts were documented in and informed the recommendations of the Phase 1 working paper. They were also shared and discussed with the Technical Advisory Committee members in the meetings discussed below.

## **Technical Advisory Committee Meetings**

### May 7, 2015 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

At the April 1, 2015 kickoff meeting, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) suggested additional organizations which were invited to participate in future TAC meetings including:

- United Way
- SEACUS
- Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center
- Freeport-McMoRan Inc.
- County Board of Supervisors
- Chamber of Commerce

A second meeting with the TAC was held at end of the three-day site visit on May 7, 2015 at 1:00 PM. During this meeting, the consultants provided a preliminary report of findings from other outreach efforts and provided an overview of potential service designs, costs and revenues, and governance models which are further developed in the Phase I Transit Feasibility Working Paper.

At the May 7, 2015 TAC meeting, members were asked a series of questions and there was general consensus in responses to the following questions:

■ *Is there a need for public transportation in the study area in Graham County?*

TAC Consensus: There is a need for additional public transportation within the study area.

■ *What service model will best meet the need?*

TAC Consensus: A combination of community service route with fixed stops and schedule, plus continued demand response service for seniors and persons with disabilities.

■ *Is funding available to implement and sustain the service?*

TAC Consensus: Funding will need to be found through bundling of resources, including in-kind contributions, from a wide variety of governmental and other sources. Population is likely to be the most agreeable mechanism for allocating share among local jurisdictions.

■ *Is there a viable institutional structure to govern and manage the service?*

TAC Consensus: An Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority is likely to be the fairest and most sustainable governance model. Preference for governance only (without employees) which delegates functions to existing jurisdictional staff or contractors.

July 7, 2015 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

A third meeting with the TAC was held on July 7, 2015 at 9:00 am when the consulting team presented findings of chapters of the Graham County Draft Transit Feasibility Working Paper, dated June 22, 2015. A PowerPoint presentation provided TAC members with additional information on service plan options, governance options and the results of three financial scenarios. The best estimate scenario provided each potential entity with the cost sharing required in order to provide the necessary matching funds for a potential FTA 5311 grant.

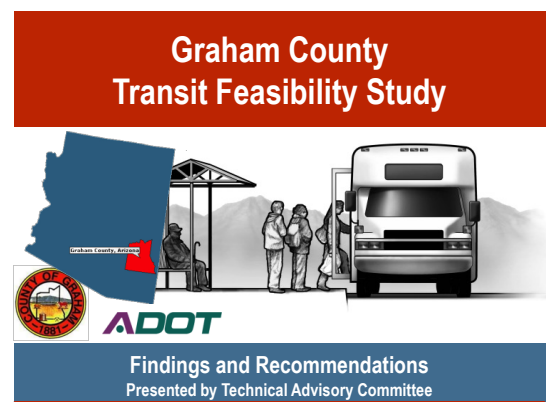
At that time, the TAC made recommendations that transit is feasible in Graham County. With the additional detailed information contained in the Graham County Draft Transit Feasibility working paper, the TAC confirmed the consensus reached on the key questions iterated above for the May 7, 2015 working paper.

Input was provided regarding the need for a two-page summary that could be easily read by elected officials. Other suggestions, such as the extension of the route to Swift Trail Junction, were incorporated into a standalone Executive Summary and the full report. These revised documents were completed and sent out to the TAC on July 13, 2015.

## **Meetings with the Governing Bodies of the Town of Pima, Town of Thatcher, City of Safford, and Graham County**

The Graham County Transit Feasibility Study Phase I scope of work included the provision that “TAC members will present the recommendations to the Graham County Board of Supervisors, Safford City Council. Thatcher Town Council and Pima Town Council to determine if there is consensus on the feasibility of public transportation in Graham County.”

Prior to the governing body meetings, the consulting



team recruited Laura Rogers from the Graham County Health Department, a member of the TAC, to be the lead presenter of the TAC findings and recommendations to each of the governing bodies.

Laura Rogers provided a presentation to each of the governing bodies in a PowerPoint presentation prepared by the consulting team on the key findings and recommendations of the TAC. Ms. Rogers led the discussion with support of other TAC members. ADOT staff also participated in one of the meetings. Some examples of questions and concerns raised by the elected officials during the meetings included:

- Will there be a fee to use the transit service?
- Is Greyhound service separate from what is being proposed?
- What is the difference between medical transportation and public transportation?
- Would the Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority administer the bus operations?
- Is there assurance that Federal Transit Administration funding will continue each year?
- Can a jurisdiction cancel membership in the Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority if they don't realize a benefit from the transit service?

The above along with other questions/concerns documented by Laura Rogers will be addressed in Phase II of the Transit Feasibility Study.

The meetings with the governing bodies were held on:

- City of Stafford City Council meeting: July 27, 2015
- Town of Pima Town Council meeting: August 4, 2015
- Town of Thatcher Town Council meeting: August 24, 2015
- Graham Council Board of Supervisors meetings on September 21 and October 5, 2015

At each meeting, the governing bodies of each entity reviewed the key findings and recommendations of the TAC and authorized the study to proceed to Phase II of the Graham County Transit Feasibility Study.